Inspection of a good school: Ivy Chimneys Primary School

Ivy Chimneys Road, Epping, Essex CM16 4EP

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 June 2022

Outcome

Ivy Chimneys Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend Ivy Chimneys Primary School. They have no end of opportunities to broaden their horizons and see what possibilities await them as they grow up. They are supported to step out of their comfort zone and try new things, such as canoeing, performing on stage, or raising money for charity.

Pupils get on very well with adults, and with each other. Adults have high expectations of pupils, which pupils live up to. There is a mutual respect between adults and pupils. Adults are caring, and pupils trust that they will receive help if they run into a problem. This includes bullying if it happens, which it rarely does.

Pupils know how to stay safe and look after themselves well. Younger pupils know how to be safe when they are out in public, and older pupils are clear how to use the internet responsibly and safely. Pupils' mental health has the same priority as their physical health. The school's rabbit, Twitch, is always on hand for pupils who may need help to calm down or relax if they are feeling worried or anxious.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have ensured that teachers are clear on what pupils need to know and remember in each subject, and by when. Pupils learn the curriculum in a logical order and develop detailed knowledge and skills in many subjects. Teachers explain concepts clearly. They have a strong knowledge in the subjects they teach and can quickly spot if a pupil does not understand. When this happens, teachers provide pupils with extra help.

Children in the Reception classes are immersed in learning. They take real care of their classroom, along with the large and purposeful outdoor space. Adults know the children extremely well. They take every opportunity to talk with children, read to children and ask them questions about what they are learning. This means they start Year 1 as confident, independent and articulate children ready to face their new challenges.

Reading weaves through the curriculum. Most pupils learn to read with accuracy and fluency. This means they can read ever more complex books, to help them learn well in different subjects, as they get older. Adults are skilled at teaching reading. They have received detailed training to help them implement the new phonics programme. Most pupils keep up with the demands of the programme. However, because it has not been fully implemented, the support that a small number of weaker readers receive is not precisely matched to their needs. This slows their progress and achievement.

Pupils' wider development is a strength of the school. Leaders have thought carefully about the experiences and opportunities they want pupils to have. These include learning first aid, auditioning for a talent show and sharing their views about the school in the regular 'chatter groups'. Pupils learn how to manage money and think about different careers they might like in the future. Pupils are very well prepared to be responsible citizens.

Pupils discuss and debate challenging concepts and events. They do this confidently, but with empathy, for example when older pupils learn about the holocaust. Adults do not shield pupils learning about important events in the past that can sometimes be difficult to understand. Pupils know that whatever faith or beliefs people have, everyone should be treated fairly and as individuals.

Pupils behave well in lessons and in the playground. This means lessons are rarely disturbed and the playground is a safe and harmonious place to be.

Leaders provide a range of effective training for staff. This helps them continually improve their practice. For example, adults who work with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) know how to best provide support for these pupils. This means activities are carefully adapted so that pupils with SEND learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Senior leaders think carefully about staff workload before introducing new policies or ways of working. Staff value the support they receive from senior leaders. They approach their work with the shared vison to provide the very best they can for pupils.

Members of the local governing board have an accurate view of the school. They provide effective support to leaders, but do not shy away from asking challenging questions when needed. They do not simply take what leaders tell them at face value. Governors make regular visits to school to see for themselves.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Adults are well trained to spot the signs that a pupil might be at risk of harm. Leaders ensure that all adults know and use the school's procedures if they have a concern. Leaders have created a positive culture of safeguarding. Adults are highly vigilant and know that 'it could happen here.'

Governors make regular checks to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Leaders make detailed checks on new members of staff before they start working in school. Pupils know the steps they need to take to keep safe because adults teach them well.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of weaker readers in key stage 1 do not receive the precise support they need to help them catch up quickly. This slows down the way in which these pupils learn to read. Leaders should ensure that teachers fully implement the phonics programme to provide effective support for these pupils who need extra help in learning to read.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Ivy Chimneys Primary School, to be good in November 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use Ofsted Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further guidance on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can complain to Ofsted.

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	145605
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10238293
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	297
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lee Batson
Headteacher	Rebecca Sigston
Website	www.ivychimneys.net
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in March 2018 as part of the Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust (the trust).
- The headteacher took up her position in September 2019.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to an adult.
- The inspector evaluated the curriculum plans and spoke to leaders and pupils about several other subjects.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and members of the local governing board. The inspector also held a

telephone conversation with the chief executive officer of the trust and with a representative of the local authority.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised the single central record and evaluated safeguarding paperwork and systems. The inspector spoke to leaders, teachers, support staff, governors and pupils.
- The inspector considered the 161 responses and free-text comments to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents and carers, along with the 38 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Nathan Lowe, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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